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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to discover what expert teachers do to promote and maintain effective discipline in their classrooms. The research took place in four secondary schools in Scotland. A random sample of students (aged 12-16 years) in each of the schools were asked to write the names of the three teachers in the school who were best at getting the class to work well and to write what it was that each of the three teachers did that made the class work well. The 16 selected teachers were observed for 2 weeks. Brief interviews with each teacher sought to elicit the teacher's own constructs of what he or she did to get the class to work well. From the analysis of the teachers' descriptions and explanations of what they do to maintain effective discipline and keep the class running smoothly, a framework was derived for understanding effective classroom discipline. The framework, grounded in teachers' actual practice, not in what they think they ought to do or what they would do in ideal circumstances, has three main elements: actions, goals, and conditions. The framework could be used in three ways: (1) helping beginning teachers to analyze classroom practice; (2) helping beginning teachers to reflect upon their practice; and (3) helping beginning teachers to develop their lesson planning. (JD)

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How Do Teachers Talk about Maintaining Effective Discipline In Their Classrooms?

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How do teachers talk about maintaining effective discipline in their classrooms?

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Introduction

In recent years there has been an increased interest in the nature of the experienced teacher's craft. McIntyre (1988) helpfully reviews this interest as generating research in four main categories. There has been a substantial body of research on teachers' planning, reviewed by Clark and Yinger (1987); a second category is research on the nature of teachers' classroom decision making (Calderhead 1979; 1984; 1988); Brown and McIntyre (1988) have undertaken a study of teachers' professional craft knowledge; and recent work in Stanford by Lee Schulman and others has concentrated on the subject specific aspects of pedagogical craft knowledge (Schulman 1986; Wilson, Schulman and Richert 1987). One of the reasons for this increase is the concern to improve and develop teacher education programmes. David Berliner (1986) in his address to the American Educational Research Association summed up the point:

> the performance of experts, although not necessarily perfect, provides a place to start from when we instruct novices. The experts' performance provides us... with a temporary pedagogical theory, a temporary scaffolding from which novices may learn to become more expert.

Berliner also pointed to the difficulty in distinguishing between experienced and expert teachers in any systematic way. For our purposes we use the terms expert and experienced interchangeably. As we will see below, when sample details are given, the teachers taking part in our research were experienced in that none had been teaching for less than five years; they were also expert in the opinion of their pupils.

In this paper we look at one aspect of expert performance as a teacher, that of maintaining effective classroom discipline. It is important to differentiate, however, between *describing* the performance of expert teachers and *explaining* how they came to acquire their expertise. Our work is essentially concerned with providing a description of what it is expert teachers do to promote and maintain effective discipline in their classrooms. We have tried to do this by getting teachers to articulate what they do routinely and spontaneously in their classrooms. Our approach has been one of building up a picture of this aspect of the teacher's craft using teachers' own ideas about what they do to get their classes to work well. Much of the previous research on classroom discipline has provided tips for beginning teachers about what to do in their classrooms. Helpful checklists have been generated most of which emphasise the need for careful lesson planning, knowing what the school policy is, which sanctions are approved of and so on. However, most of this work has been the result of researchers imposing *their* ideas on what should be done having observed experienced teachers at work, resulting in what Schon (1983) has called 'espoused theories' of classroom practice. There have been few studies which try to understand what it is

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that expert teachers do in maintaining discipline from the *teachers'* point of view. We have tried to understand what it is that teachers do by letting them speak for themselves about their practice in specific lessons. Our claim is that by using this approach we have been able to develop a framework which explains these teachers' practice - a framework grounded in the classroom reality of the teachers themselves. The framework is, therefore, not an idealised version of what teachers should do; it is a framework which describes what they actually do. We hope this framework will be useful to those involved in pre-service training and to those involved with probationers. It may also be useful to those teachers interested in reflecting upon their own practice as a prelude to changing some aspect of that practice. Of course, being effective at maintaining discipline is not the same thing as being an effective teacher. Without good discipline, however, no learning can take place, except perhaps the learning about how to provoke and annoy the teacher and how to provide entertainment for other pupils.

Before talking about the framework for understanding teachers' classroom practice in maintaining discipline it is necessary to say a little about what counted as effective discipline, how we chose the teachers to study and about how we collected information about their practice.

What counted as effective discipline?

Much of the writing on classroom discipline assumes in Denscombe's (1985) phrase that what constitutes classroom control is really quite obvious and self-evident. However, attempts at definitions have been made. In the philosophical tradition, Peters (1966) suggests that discipline is conformity with the rules. Other philosophers such as Wilson (1977) or Smith (1985) differentiate discipline from control or coercion, maintaining that the essential difference is whether we follow rules willingly because we see them as right or appropriate or because we are under some threat or retribution or punishment if we do not adhere to them. For Francis (1975, p15) a school teacher writing about his attempt at establishing discipline, it is:

> a classroom of thirty kids with a teacher in charge of them exercising some form of control.

Furtwengler and Kennert (1982, p4) providing guidance on effective discipline for school administrators offer an even looser definition. Discipline is:

> the process designed to aid students develop social behaviours and attitudes for appropriate participation in an adult democratic culture.

Even if the problem of definition is turned upside down and an attempt made to describe indiscipline no clear picture emerges from the literature (eg. Docking 1980; Kyriacou 1986).

Our concern was with teachers' definitions of effective discipline and with what they did to bring this about. However, we were not entirely open-ended in our approach to data gathering and

we used the literature on discipline to help us to draw very loose boundaries around the kinds of definitions we were interested in. We did not want teachers to assume that we were only interested in punitive or authoritarian approaches to their pupils. Rather we wanted them to talk about how they went about creating an atmosphere which allowed learning to take place. This was our broad conceptualisation of discipline and it was operationalised into a simple interview question for teachers, namely; 'What did you do to get the class to work well?' We should make it clear that we had no independent measures of whether learning was allowed to take place. We were reliant on teachers' perceptions of this. We stress too, that we did not equate being effective in terms of discipline with being an effective teacher. We saw being effective in discipline as being a necessary but not a sufficient condition for effective teaching.

The sample

The research took place in four secondary schools in Scotland. Two of the schools were situated in areas of high multiple deprivation, ie no owner occupied housing, high levels of unemployment and of single parent families. The remaining schools were in more mixed socio-economic areas, with one drawing the vast majority of its pupils from a prosperous suburb. In each secondary we wanted to study four teachers, as this number permitted contrasts and comparisons to be made but would not overwhelm us with so much information that we would not be able to analyse it properly. How were we to choose the teachers? In secondary schools in the UK it is relatively unusual for teachers to see each other teaching and we speedily came to the conclusion that the way to identify teachers who were best at 'getting the class to work well' was to ask the pupils - the people in the classroom who knew a great deal about teachers' classroom practice. After some pilot work experimenting with various ways of collecting information from pupils, such as group discussion, individual interviews and written tasks, we concentrated on asking pupils to write for us.

We asked a random sample of pupils in each of the four schools to write about two things. Firstly, they had to write down the names of the three teachers in the school who were best at getting the class to work well; secondly, on a separate piece of paper for each teacher, they had to write about what it was that each of the specific teachers did which made the class work well. Two register classes from each year S1-S4 were sampled. The pupils were aged between 12 and 16 and around 135 pupils in each school were involved in this exercise. Table 1 gives fuller details of the age composition of the sample.

Table1: Pupil sample

	Schools				
	1	2	3	4	Total
S1 12-13 (year olds)	59	56	35	39	189
S2 13-14 (year olds)	42	30	38	40	150
S3 14-15 (year olds)	46	39	34	12	131
S4 15-16 (year olds)	37	-	26	10	73
Total	184	125	133	101	543

The pupils took the business of writing about their teachers' practice very seriously and were able to identify various aspects of that practice with a high level of sophistication. We discuss the methods used to collect information about the teachers' practice in more detail below. For the moment it is important to make clear that pupils identified many more teachers than we could work with and so further choices had to be made.

In making choices our first criterion was that of frequency of mention. We eliminated teachers mentioned by small numbers of pupils, recognising that this was somewhat arbitrary since not all the teachers in any one school would have taught all the pupils in our sample.

Secondly, we looked for teachers who were identified by more than one age group of pupils. We were interested in understanding effective classroom discipline by the same teacher in different contexts and teaching pupils of different age groups was one obvious way of getting at this.

Thirdly, where choices still had to be made, we tried to select teachers from different subject departments. Of course, the small number of teachers involved would not allow us to explain any differences among teachers as due to their subject specialisms. However, if we were able to detect patterns across the teachers from different subjects, working in different schools, teaching different age groups, then these patterns would be all the more convincing because of this diversity.

Lastly, the teachers themselves had to agree to take part. They had to be willing to put up with a researcher in their classrooms and be prepared to give up time to talk about their practice. In one of the schools, one of the teachers selected on the basis of the criteria mentioned above refused to participate.

Our sample of 16 teachers (4 from each school) consisted of the following:

- 4 maths. teachers;
- 4 science (Biology and Chemistry);
- 3 English;
- 3 Modern Studies;
- 1 History;
- 1 French.

Of these 16 teachers, 4 were principal teachers (heads of departments) and 1 was an assistant head teacher. There were 11 men and 5 women. All had taught for at least five years.

It is clear that our sample of teachers was biased. We selected the 16 on the basis of pupils' perceptions of their strengths in getting the class to work well. The pupils identified many different kinds of things which teachers did. Had we used different criteria for getting the class to work well, such as examination results or truancy rates, for example, we would probably have come up with a slightly different sample of teachers. Similarly, had we used headteachers or advisers or the inspectorate to identify staff, the sample may well have been different. It is, therefore, important to remember that these teachers were selected on the basis of pupils' comments about effective discipline but that effective discipline was conceived broadly as 'getting the class to work well.'

Research methods

There were two main approaches used to collect information about what teachers did in their classrooms to get the class to work well. We observed the teachers with their classes and we talked to them about what they did.

We observed each of the 16 teachers with two different classes for a fortnight. For some teachers, such as those of English and maths., this meant observing a large number of lessons; for others, in the sciences or in the social subjects, fewer lessons were observed as the teachers saw their pupils less often. Observing the teachers with two different classes gave them the opportunity to compare and contrast their approaches, if they wanted, thereby helping us to gain a fuller understanding of the factors influencing their approach. Observing over a fortnight gave time for the teachers and pupils to get used to our presence and it also allowed teachers to refer to such influences as time of day or lesson length on their approach. The observation was unstructured and non-participant. We took no part in the teaching. We noted in general terms what the teacher was doing and what the pupils were doing (Walker and Adelman 1987) taking particular care to note non-verbal behaviour as the lessons were tape-recorded. The main purpose of the observation was to provide a record as a shared reference point for the teacher and the researcher to talk about what the teacher had done in the lesson to get the class to work well.

As near as possible to the observed lesson, sometimes directly afterwards, sometimes in the nearest break or lunchtime, we asked the teacher, 'What did you do to get the class to work

well?' The teachers found this a very difficult question to answer. We were asking them to make explicit their routine, taken for granted behaviour in their classrooms. We had many requests to suggest to the teachers what *we* thought they had done to get the class to work well. The whole point of our approach was *to elicit from teachers their own constructs of what they did* and we tried to resist the many invitations and temptations to suggest what we thought they had done. This meant that initial interviews were often very brief, perhaps five minutes or so as teachers said all they had to say about their practice. Our only probes were, ' Can you tell me a bit more about that?' and 'Why did you do that?' and 'Was that the same as in lesson such and such?' However, as time went on, the teachers gradually had more to say, perhaps because they knew they were going to be talking about their actions and so became more conscious of them. It may be, of course, that they became more expert at providing 'rationalisations' rather than 'true explanations' of their practice. Our approach to collecting and analysing the information about teachers' classroom practice closely mirrors that of Brown and McIntyre (1988) in their study of teachers' professional craft knowledge and we say more about our analysis of the data below.

Data analysis

In analysing the data we tried to follow the same procedure as that adopted by Brown and McIntyre (1988). This involved the following sequence:

- analysing (independently) a pair of teachers' interview transcripts;
- identifying their actions for promoting and maintaining discipline at a descriptive level;
- generating concepts which helped illuminate the teachers' talk about actions;
- re-analysing the transcripts using the concepts;
- identifying the data not covered by the concepts;
- moving on to the next teachers' transcripts and using the concepts;
- identifying their actions for promoting and maintaining discipline;
- trying out the concepts previously generated and so on.

This procedure was used for all transcripts. As can be imagined, it was a time consuming process but one which would, we hoped, generate hypotheses to be carried from one teacher interview to the next. There was a good deal of brainstorming, of bouncing ideas off each other and it was very important to have at least three of us involved in the work so that concepts could be debated and rejected, or affirmed. The generalisations which we were able to establish as a result of this process were seen as providing the basis for the theoretical framework which follows. However, in generating this theoretical framework, we are again, indebted to Brown and McIntyre (1988) for their identification of the kinds of criteria which had to be met in order for the theoretical framework to count as grounded in the data. These criteria were as follows:

- all aspects of the framework had to be directly supported by evidence (it is easy to add key elements which create a coherent abstract system but are not themselves observable in the data);
- the generalisations had to relate to normal practice, not to what the teacher does on rare occasions;
- where the generalisations went beyond one person and one occasion, they had to be based on data for each teacher and from each of that teacher's lessons;
- it was not sufficient to identify a series of generalisable but isolated elements as what teachers know or think, the relationships between these elements had to be identified;
- the framework should not discount any part of the teacher's account as 'diverging from relevant matters';
- the theoretical account of the teacher's knowledge and thinking had to be accepted by the teacher as a balanced and adequate account.

These demanding criteria were difficult to meet in full. For example, some data were excluded from our analysis because the interviewer had led the respondents, from time to time, by suggesting particular actions for maintaining discipline to them. Sometimes teachers talked about their ideal behaviour rather than their actual behaviour and these data were discounted too, although we have made use of them, outwith the generation of a conceptual framework, to speculate about how teachers come to acquire their routines and repertoires of actions. Nevertheless, by following these rules we have generated a conceptual framework for describing how teachers promote and maintain discipline in their classrooms.

In describing this framework it is important to be clear about the nature of the claims we are making about it. First of all, are we confident that we have gained access to a part of teachers' professional craft knowledge? We are fairly confident we have done so for two main reasons. The first reason lies in the consistency of the accounts teachers presented. The 16 teachers from different schools, different subject specialisms and different pre-service training courses talked in similar ways about their practice, ways which we have tried to represent in the model outlined below. They have also endorsed our interpretation of their accounts when we fed them back to them for comments. The second reason for our confidence lies in the face validity of our framework. It seems to make sense to other teachers who find it easy to identify with.

Secondly, to what extent have we been able to map teachers' professional craft knowledge? Have we provided a comprehensive account of that part of craft knowledge which is concerned with discipline? The answer to this must be 'No.' This is because we have concentrated on what teachers do to get their classes to work well. Had we concentrated on how teachers respond to problems in their classes, then we might have got different responses. What we can claim is that

we have been able to map a little bit of teachers' craft knowledge in promoting and maintaining effective discipline. Our paper concludes by discussing how this map might be of use.

A framework for understanding effective classroom discipline

The remainder of this paper sets out the framework we have derived from analysing teachers' descriptions and explanations of what they do to get their classes to work well. The framework is grounded in teachers' actual practice not in what they think they ought to do or what they would do in ideal circumstances. In analysing teachers' interviews we discounted all general statements such as, 'Typically I would' or 'Normally I do' if these did not refer to the lesson in hand. We wanted to develop an understanding of what teachers did, not what they should do.

The teachers involved in the research worked in four different schools, teaching a variety of subjects and pupils and had themselves undergone pre-service training at a range of institutions. In addition they varied in their career patterns, some having worked in a number of different schools and others having experience in only one or two schools. To develop a framework which helped understanding of all these potential influences on how teachers went about promoting and maintaining classroom discipline meant that the framework had to be at a fairly abstract level. Elsewhere (Munn, Johnstone and Chalmers 1990), we flesh out the framework by giving examples of the ways in which the teachers acted and the kinds of influences which impinged upon their actions. The elements of our framework are as follows:

- actions which are proactive and actions which are reactive;
- a sign or signs to provoke reactions;
- two kinds of teachers' judgements - whether to act and how to act;
- a range of conditions affecting teachers' actions;
- a range of goals influencing teachers' actions.

We describe each of these elements in more detail below.

Proactive and reactive approaches

When our 16 teachers talked about the kinds of things they had done to get particular classes to work well it soon became apparent that they did some things in advance of the class ever appearing in their classrooms. For example, they would make sure that they were in the classroom before the pupils arrived or they made sure, in a science experiment, that they had the apparatus set up before the lesson began. These kinds of statements we called proactive because they were taken in advance of any sign that the class was not working well. However, these proactive approaches did not just apply to the teachers' physical presence in the classroom or to setting up equipment. The teachers also talked about their lesson planning; making connections with previous work done by the class, thinking through in advance how to explain a difficult topic and thinking about, for instance, what kinds of activities would interest the pupils. Proactive approaches do not only apply to actions taken before the beginning of the lesson. They can also apply during the course of

the lesson where the teacher makes sure that the class knows what it is supposed to be doing in particular parts of a lesson. An example of this kind of proactive approach is the teacher who said, ' I gave them a chance to ask me if they had any difficulties (before they settled down to silent work).' The teacher explained that there was, therefore, no reason for any pupil to talk out of turn.

Being proactive then, means that teachers prepare things in advance, they do not wait for something to happen to prevent the class from working well before taking action. Of course, the notion of being proactive as an aid to effective discipline has been used by other writers. Kounin (1970), for example, using a different research technique, found that what distinguished effective classroom managers was not their ability to deal with disruptions once they arose but their ability to prevent disruption in the first place. Similarly, much recent research on teachers' planning has found the distinction made by Jackson (1968) between preactive and interactive contexts of teachers' activity useful (Calderhead 1984; Clark and Yinger, 1987). Our notion of being proactive is not quite the same as the preactive context identified by Jackson. The teachers talked about being proactive before the lesson began which is our understanding of Jackson's definition. They also talked about being proactive while the lesson was underway which Jackson did not count as the preactive context. The distinction is an important one and not just a matter of arcane academic debate because it points up, as we shall see, teachers' complex decision making about the actions to take to get the class to work well. For the moment, however, our main point is simply that some actions taken by teachers to get the class to work well are taken in advance of any indication that the class is not working well. We have called these actions proactive.

In contrast, some actions are triggered by a sign or signs. Here the teacher is responding to a cue that individual pupils, or groups, or the class as a whole are not working well. These responding type of actions we have called reactive. Some examples here illustrate this kind of action which we have called reactive.

> I was very aware of one girl talking. She was playing with a mirror. I watched her for about fifteen seconds ...She realised... and got on with her work.

The signs were that one girl was talking and playing with her mirror. The teacher's reaction was to watch the girl until she realised she was being watched and got on with her work.

Reactions can provide positive reinforcement of good work as well as serving to deal with disruption, as the following example makes clear:

> They were actually behaving very well. I made sure they realised it because it was a good period...quite enjoyed that ... And that contrasts very well with the times when they know they're in big trouble and the humour has gone. It's stern faces all the way.

This teacher's reaction to the class behaving well was to make sure the class knew it and one of the ways of transmitting that was to use humour. A teacher can also decide to 'turn a blind

eye' to a sign that all is not well in the belief that in some circumstances no action is better than action.

So far we have described one element in our framework, that of teachers' actions, and we have tried to show that there are two kinds of actions. There are those which are *proactive*, taken before there is any indication or sign that the class is not working well and those which are *reactions* to a sign that the class is not working well. We have stressed that these ideas have been found by other researchers and that a characteristic of being effective in getting the class to work well is to use proactive approaches as well as reactive ones. There are many influences on the teacher's judgement about whether to take action and if so, what action to take. It is to these that we now turn. These influences affect both proactive and reactive approaches to getting the class to work well.

Conditions

The context in which teaching is carried out has a profound effect on what teachers do and on what they count as getting the class to work well. What works in one lesson for one teacher with one particular group of pupils will not necessarily work for the same teacher with the same group of pupils in a different lesson, far less for a range of teachers and pupils. One only has to think of the difference between teaching mid-morning on a Monday and last thing on a Friday afternoon to see the force of this point. Many writers have pointed out the context specific nature of discipline (eg Denscombe 1984; Galloway 1983; Reynolds 1989) and how far we are from being able to satisfy beginning teachers' demands for recipe knowledge about how to achieve effective discipline (McIntyre 1988). In analysing the teachers' talk about getting the class to work well, we were struck by their references to the context in which they were teaching affecting their actions, and it is this which we have called conditions. We have been able to classify 12 different categories of conditions which teachers referred to as influencing their actions. We do not wish to describe these in detail here, merely to get across the idea that teachers' actions to promote and maintain effective discipline are not context free. To give a flavour of the kind of talk we have classified as being about conditions we include a small number of examples and try to show how they impinge on teachers' actions.

One of the most frequently mentioned conditions mentioned by our 16 teachers was what we have called 'knowledge of the pupil.' Teachers often cited what they knew about a particular pupil as influencing their decision about whether to act and what action to take. Such knowledge might include knowledge about the pupil's home background, the pupil's behaviour in previous years in the school or knowledge about the pupil's abilities. We are not suggesting that teachers' knowledge about individual pupils was necessarily accurate or complete; merely that what teachers believe they know about pupils influences their actions in getting the class to work well. In the following example the teacher explains his action, having a wee chat very quietly with a pupil , in terms of his knowledge of that pupil.

> He (pupil) is very backward. ... He tends to be the butt of many of the other pupils' jokes. ... I feel sorry for the boy. I think he responds to a quiet word rather than a shout or a loud command. ... I had a wee chat quietly in his ear ... that unless (his behaviour) improved he'd be sitting beside me.

The teacher's knowledge of the pupil can also explain a decision to act differently when the same offence has been committed. Pupils X and Y had each forgotten to bring their jotters to the lesson. This was breaking a well established classroom rule. The teacher decided to punish pupil Y and not to punish pupil X. He explained,

> Y is a rascal of the first order. There is lots of information about him. He's just at it. X is low ability, a nice wee lad. He has genuinely forgotten.

We will return to this example later but it serves to illustrate the influence of a particular condition, knowledge of the pupil, on the teacher's decision about whether to act and how to act.

Another condition which influences teachers' actions is that of time. We have classified a variety of teachers' statements about time under this general heading; statements about time of day, the time available in the lesson and the time of year, for example, are all included in this category of conditions. One teacher explained why she had torn a strip off a class about their poor work because, 'There is two weeks of teaching time left (before public examinations start).' Another explained, 'I basically just let them let off steam today,' because it was the afternoon before the Christmas holidays began and it was acceptable to her that the class should be lighthearted and spend some time doing quizzes.

> Some of them vote with their feet and don't come back in the afternoon before a holiday. ... For the ones that come back you... can do one of two things. You can make them work which will teach them not to come back next time ... or you can give them a reward. So I usually use things like quizzes or charades ... and that's what I did today.

There are, then, a range of conditions which influence teachers' actions and these influence both proactive and reactive approaches to getting the class to work well. Conditions are not the only influence on teachers' actions, however. The final element in our framework is that of goals and we now describe what these are and how they influence actions.

Goals

In any lesson a teacher has a goal or more usually a number of goals. These are things which the teacher hopes will be achieved during the course of the lesson or as the end result of the lesson. The teacher can have goals for the class as a whole, for example, that they get through a particular piece of work and goals for a particular pupil, for example, that she answers a question. We want

to suggest that goals influence the kinds of action which teachers take in getting the class to work well. For example, one teacher gave pupils a task to do as they were watching a video during a science lesson to achieve the goal that ' the video was productively used.' Another goal mentioned by many of the teachers is to encourage pupils to answer a question and not feel foolish if they get the answer wrong. In the following extract, the teacher explains her actions in terms of achieving this goal.

> I didn't want to say 'No' (to the pupil's answer) because I wanted her to feel she could answer again. ... So I said, ' Well, it's not right but it's not wrong.' ... She was on her way to the right answer.

Another teacher stressed:

> I take daft answers as well as good answers because I don't like to discourage anyone from answering out.

Goals can be in conflict and can assume different orders of priority. If we return to the example of the teacher who punished pupil Y and not pupil X for the same offence of forgetting to bring their jotters, we can see from the teacher's explanation that it was goal conflict as well as the influence of the knowledge of the pupil which led to his actions. Pupil X was an habitual truant and his appearance in the class was the first for some time. The teacher did not want to put him off returning to school by giving him a punishment on his first day back. This goal assumed a higher priority than the goal of wanting to be seen to be fair in his handling of breaches of classroom rules. Let the teacher explain the rationale for his decision in his own words.

> He's (Pupil X) low ability, an awful nice wee lad. We're lucky if we get him to school each day, so I'm bending the rules with him which is a bit unfair because ... I didn't give him a punishment exercise (although) with any one else I would have but I felt it's so good to have him here and he has *genuinely* forgotten.

A few moments later the teacher makes clear that one of his goals is to be seen to be fair.

> You've got to bend over backwards to prove that you are fair, to prove that you are fair and very often you've got to explain things to pupils to make them aware why they are wrong. ... I do try to be fair to them.

This single example demonstrates not only the complexity of the decision making - the teacher is having to make judgements about whether to take action, which action would be appropriate given the circumstances of the pupils concerned and make decisions about the order of priority of conflicting goals - it also demonstrates the rapidity of decision making. This entire classroom incident took less than three minutes.

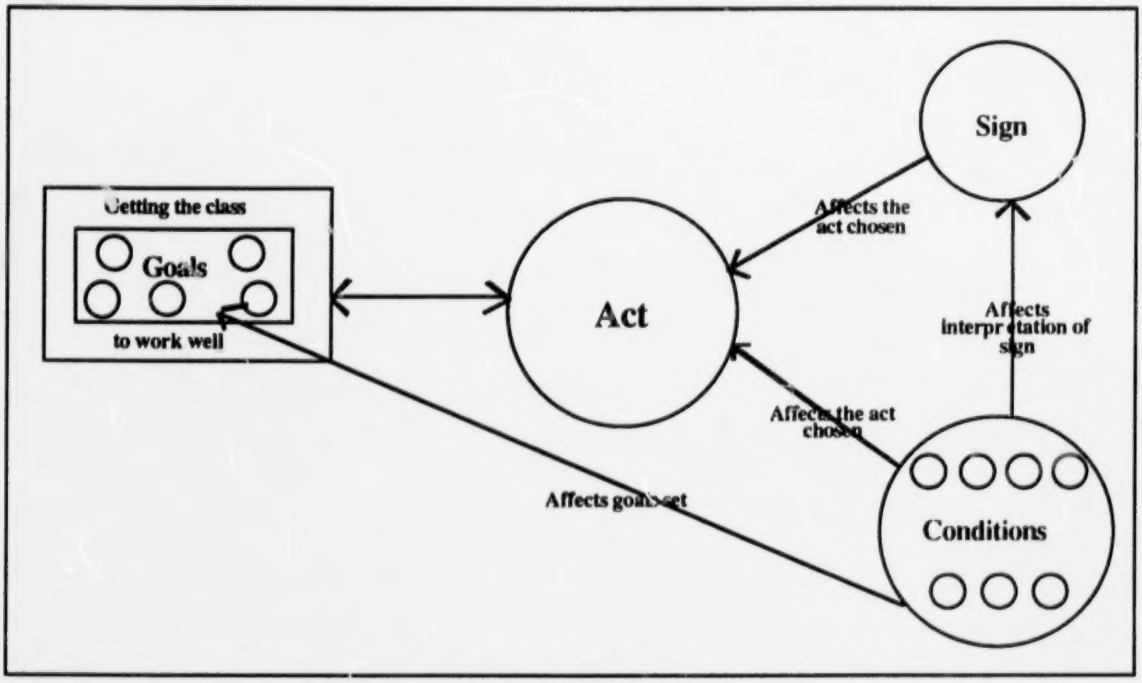
The interaction of goals, conditions and actions

In the example quoted immediately above, it can be seen how a condition, knowledge of the pupil, influenced the teacher's goals and hence his actions. It is clear that conditions might affect not only the prioritisation of goals but the selection of particular goals in the first place. So, if a teacher is with a class of five eighteen year olds all working towards scholarship level of studies in history, one of the goals might be that the pupils should develop an understanding of historiography, or be able to discuss critically the role of the great man in history, or any number of so-called cognitive intellectual goals. On the other hand, if the same teacher is with a class of twenty 15 year-olds who have decided to leave school at the earliest opportunity, the goal might be to keep the pupils quiet for the lesson. In our framework, the overarching goal, which we suggested to teachers, was that of getting the class to work well. However, as can be seen from the small number of examples already given, teachers talked to us about a number of other goals which they had and sometimes explicitly linked these to the perceived context in which they were working. In the diagram setting out our framework at the end of this paper there is therefore, an arrow linking conditions and goals. It is tempting to speculate that experienced teachers are expert at matching goals and conditions. In other words, they know what are appropriate and realistic goals for a given set of conditions. It seems likely that they have a repertoire of goals which they can pull out as appropriate to such and such conditions operating in their classrooms. It also seems likely that when goals and conditions 'match' that the opportunities for disruption are reduced - although of course, the actions which the teacher takes also affects the occurrence or not of disruption. Correspondingly, when goals and conditions are out of kilter, opportunities for disruption are likely to be increased. There are many questions posed by our information from teachers about what they do to get the class to work well. Not least among these questions is how teachers build up a repertoire of actions and goals and how they come to recognise their appropriateness in particular sets of circumstances. We can offer some limited and speculative answers to these questions, answers generated from our 16 teachers. However, before we do so let us sum up the elements of the framework which describes what teachers do to get their classes to work well. These are:

- that teachers use proactive and reactive approaches;
- that reactions are provoked by signs (a particular class of conditions);
- that a range of conditions impinge on teachers' decisions about whether to act and how to act;
- that a range of goals influence actions and that goals can be in conflict;
- that conditions affect the selection and order of priority of goals.

We have tried to present our framework in a diagram which we hope will help to show the interaction of goals, conditions and actions.

Figure 1: How do teachers talk about getting the class to work well?



How do teachers build up repertoires of actions?

As we mentioned in the introduction, it is important to keep clear the distinction between *describing* teachers' classroom practice and *explaining how they acquire the knowledge* which informs their practice. The emphasis of our work has been in trying to describe teachers' practice in regard to discipline. In talking to us about their practice, however, the teachers sometimes offered explanations of how they knew that particular actions were likely to be effective. Our data are not as rich here as in descriptions of what teachers did. This is to be expected since our concern was to try to understand what teachers did and the influences on it, rather than on how teachers come to acquire expertise. The explanations of how teachers come to know what to do are necessarily incomplete and more work is needed in this area.

Our data on teachers' explanations of how they know what to do in the classroom to promote and maintain discipline tended to refer to their previous experience. They talked about this in general terms, finding it difficult to describe more particularly how they learned from experience. A typical comment was:

> Through experience you find your own way of working.
>
> One learns techniques over the years which you find productive on both sides.

How do teachers learn from experience? One way which we were able to classify was that of the *past success of the action in similar circumstances.*

For example, one teacher who had sent the whole class out of the classroom at the beginning of the lesson because they were too noisy, and got them to line up again outside his door, explained:

> I did that because I've done it before and it worked.

Some teachers, interestingly enough typically those in the sciences, talked about their *initial training* as a way of helping them to develop experience. They described how important safety procedures were in a science laboratory and that this had been learned in college. They occasionally made reference to the advice they had received in initial training on how to handle discipline. One teacher mentioned :

> We were always told (in college) not to say stupid things (such as) 'I'm waiting' (because the pupils could always retort) ' So what! You can wait!'

Our final classification of explanation for teachers' knowledge about what actions to take is that of *beliefs about teaching*. These beliefs were many and varied. One example serves to illustrate the general point. A belief mentioned by many teachers and one which will be familiar to many was that one should not ridicule a child for giving a wrong answer. The following comment makes this clear:

> (I think it is important) to be positive when they give an answer. I think it is important to reinforce, because they are 13 (years old) and they don't want to make a fool of themselves. ... But that goes back to college training where you're told,'You don't say "No" You say, " That's not quite what I'm looking for." '

Here we have a good example of a teacher showing how two of our categories of explanation interact. Her belief about teaching has been influenced by her college course and both of these are sources of knowledge to her about how she should act when a child gives a wrong answer to a question. Similarly, a teacher's belief that 'children like to be occupied productively' meant that he always tried to work 'at a good pace.' His knowledge of what a good pace was was built up by experience in teaching. Our limited data in the area of how teachers come to know what to do in particular circumstances raise intriguing questions about how experience and beliefs are built up. This is an area for further research.

How can the framework be used?

This paper has tried to set out a framework for understanding how teachers talk about getting the class to work well. This framework has three main elements:

- actions;
- goals;
- conditions.

It is essentially simple and in many ways it would be surprising if it were more elaborate if it is an accurate representation of the concepts which teachers operationalise in getting the class to work well. The wide ranging nature of the teacher's job and the unpredictability of the whole business of teaching would suggest that a complicated framework would not be workable in the day to day reality of classrooms. We have tried to show that the apparent simplicity of the framework camouflages the complexity of the decision making which teachers engage in as they promote and maintain effective discipline. We have given brief examples of the wide range of conditions that impinge upon their actions. We have given examples, too, of the different kinds of goals which teachers have and which may be in conflict. Finally, we have classified teachers' actions as proactive or reactive. There are, of course, many actions which teachers can take in order to get the class to work well. We were able to categorise more than 13 types of actions ranging from 'explaining and helping' and 'using humour' to 'verbal rebukes' and 'threats.' For the moment it may be asked, 'How can we use this framework?' It seems to us that its main usefulness could be in the training of beginning teachers and in the professional development of probationers. We see it as being useful in three main ways.

- **In helping beginning teachers analyse classroom practice**

As a beginning teacher in the UK one is presented with marvellous opportunities to observe other teachers at work. These opportunities rapidly disappear once pre-service days are over and so it is important that the maximum benefit is achieved from classroom observation. There have been many books designed to help students observe classrooms. However, these tend to concentrate on techniques of observation (eg Walker and Adelman 1987) or on particular techniques of classroom control (eg Wragg 1981, 1984). They have not tended to provide an overall conceptualisation of what teachers are doing as they go about getting the class to work well. We see our framework as being a potentially useful adjunct to the classroom observation texts already available in providing such a conceptualisation. For example, groups of students in studying a video of experienced teachers at work could be alert for the distinction between proactive and reactive approaches; they could be asked to note the explicit conditions operating in the classroom, such as numbers of pupils, seating arrangements, subject matter of the lesson and so on. However, they could also discuss any clues about implicit conditions from comments made by the teacher and pupils. There might be clues about the previous behaviour of the pupils for instance, or the teacher's knowledge about a particular pupil.

Of course, there are severe limitations to the amount of useful information to be derived from classroom observation only. Talking to teachers about what they are doing and why is an essential part of gaining access to experienced teachers' knowledge. Some recent research has shown the extremely limited time spent in conversation between student teachers and experienced teachers when on school placement (McNab and Kennedy, 1989). Clearly, structures need to be provided to ensure that there is time for both parties to discuss specific lessons. How can we ensure that if time is provided for such discussion it is rewarding for all concerned? We suggest that a version of our approach to collecting data, namely asking teachers in an open ended way what they had done to get the class to work well, may be a fruitful way of beginning teachers getting access to experienced teachers' craft knowledge. Our experience was that teachers gradually had more to say about their practice, as the research progressed. It may be that one way of increasing the value of conversations between experienced teachers and beginning teachers is to use this kind of approach. Experiments in this have already been tried in Oxford and Glasgow which have provided some encouraging results (see Brown et al 1989). Much work remains to be done here not only in providing the right kinds of structures to enable such conversations to take place but more fundamentally in teachers becoming accustomed to talking about the nature of their expertise. One of the most important elements in generating such talk is locating discussion in a particular lesson observed by the student. In this way teachers are encouraged to talk about the things that they did rather than the things they would like to have done. Clearly it is also vital that students talk to teachers in a friendly and non-judgemental way if they are to encourage staff to talk freely and frankly.

- **In helping beginning teachers reflect upon their practice.**

Many initial teacher training courses aim to encourage their students to reflect systematically on their classroom experience. Our framework provides one kind of structure to that systematic reflection. Students could ask themselves if they were proactive, for example, and if they got progressively more proactive during their school practice. Similarly they could ask themselves if their goals and the planning to achieve those goals took sufficient account of the conditions operating in their classrooms. In essence our framework provides one way of understanding the nature of classroom discipline. It is saying to new teachers that they do not have to rely on trial and error, or to see classroom events as 'one damn thing after another.' There is a pattern to the complex series of classroom events and in understanding that pattern they improve their ability to plan to get the class to work well. Contexts for such student reflection need not always be private. There might be scope to use the framework in the de-briefing that takes place with fellow students after micro teaching, for example. Alternatively, students could work in pairs in planning and analysing lesson plans before they go out on teaching practice.

- **In helping beginning teachers develop their lesson planning**

Research has shown that beginning teachers rely much more heavily on formal lesson plans than experienced teachers (McIntyre 1988; Clark and Yinger 1979). The important point to make here concerns the formality of lesson planning by experienced teachers on the one hand and beginning teachers on the other. Many experienced teachers do not plan their lesson by writing out detailed aims and objectives; the time allocation of particular parts of the lesson; the key questions to be used; and the kinds of actions they propose to adopt - the kinds of items typically contained in a student teacher's lesson plan. However, our data from experienced teachers reveal that sophisticated planning goes on in experienced teachers' heads and suggests that as teachers gain experience, they build up repertoires of actions and goals and become expert at recognising certain conditions as calling for particular goals and actions from their repertoire. The data suggest that experienced teachers not only have a repertoire on which to plan but also use the repertoire to adapt plans if things are not going well.

Our framework suggests a particular kind of structure for the lesson plans of beginning teachers. It points up the need for students to be clear about the goals of their lessons and this will come as no surprise to those involved in teacher training. This is already a feature of many colleges' pre-service courses. Our identification of a relationship between goals and conditions suggests that students need to be able to justify their goals in the light of the prevailing conditions such as the age range of the pupils; the time of day of the lesson; the previous work done by the pupils; and their knowledge of the pupils. These are only a few of the conditions that impinge on experienced teachers' planning. There are many more subtle conditions, such as the teacher's knowledge of the particular pupils, the teacher's knowledge of what has worked previously and the teacher's knowledge of the kinds of topics which pupils of particular age ranges find interesting or difficult, which it would be unrealistic to expect a student teacher to possess. Therefore, it would be over ambitious to expect new teachers to be able to make good judgments about the conditions affecting their teaching and so the regular class teacher becomes an important source of help. We see possibilities of our framework being used to develop a kind of checklist of conditions which beginning teachers could use in seeking advice from experienced teachers about the appropriateness of their (ie beginning teachers') goals.

Our simple framework of the key concepts which teachers use in getting the class to work well, distinguishes proactive and reactive approaches to maintaining discipline. As we mentioned at the beginning of this paper, many studies have shown that effective classroom discipline arises from proactive planning. In other words experienced teachers prevent opportunities for disruption arising through their planning. They do not wait for trouble to occur. This points to the need for beginning teachers to be as proactive as possible in their planning, not only because this is what experienced teachers do, but also because new teachers do not have the repertoires of actions which experienced teachers have to call on in reacting to problems. This means that if disruption does occur beginning teachers do not have the same resources to deal with it. New teachers,

therefore, need to be thoroughly briefed about the school and subject department procedures for dealing with disruption, the kinds of sanctions which are available and so on. Again this will not come as news to those involved in teacher training. What may be news, is the need to make explicit the rationale for all this information. This is not to make beginning teachers feel even more insecure than they do already. Rather it is to convey an understanding of the differences between experienced and beginning teachers in one area of classroom practice; to be seen to be providing practical support for new teachers and to make clear that experienced teachers are there to help. If both parties can conceptualise what it is they are doing in terms of the framework we have suggested, we hope they will be provided with a practical approach to making sense of one aspect of teaching, classroom discipline. Crucially, we hope they will begin to see that the framework is a basis for reflecting on their practice and for helping their professional development as teachers.

Conclusion

This paper has reported a study of 16 experienced teachers on one aspect of their professional craft knowledge, that of promoting and maintaining effective discipline in their classrooms. The aim of the study was to understand teachers' own conceptualisations of what they did to get their classes to work well, as our formulation of effective discipline was the creation of an atmosphere which allows learning to take place. We have tried to describe teachers' conceptualisations in terms of a simple framework of actions, goals and conditions but we have pointed out that the apparent simplicity of this framework camouflages the complexity and rapidity of teachers' decisions about whether to take action and what kinds of actions to take. We feel we have made a beginning in mapping out a small part of teachers' professional craft knowledge in this area. However, as we mentioned in our introduction, our research approach means that we cannot claim to have fully mapped teachers' craft knowledge about discipline. This is so, not only because we have focussed on what teachers do well rather than on how they deal with problems but also because we have been unable to say anything about the influence on subject specific expertise on pedagogy. This is an area we hope to explore further.

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